Numb. 69

THE OBSERVATOR.

The Country-man's *Charge againſt the* Obſervator, *the* Obſervator's *Vindication. On the Parliaments ſettling* 100000 l. per Ann. *on His Royal Highneſs. On the Bill againſt Occaſional Conformity.*

From Wednesday December the 16th, to Saturday December the 19th, 1702.

Country-m. MAſter *Obſervator*, The People in Town are Angry with you. Some ſay you fill your *Obſervator* with the Sailors Grievances; what, ſay they, does that ſignify to us? we don't care what becomes of the *Q*'s and *R*'s, let 'em ſtand on the Navy Books 'till Doomsday: What a bluſter here's about *Greenwich* Hoſpital, *Regiſter-Money*, and *Wooll?* Say others, he has not ſhot at the *High Flyers* a long time, his Gun is out of order, his Powder is ſpent, or ſomewhat is the matter with him. Pray Sir, pleaſe the People, if you can.

Obſ. Whom do you talk to? D'ye think me a *Court Sycophant*, that writes for a Place; or that I affect Popularity, to be a little Idol of the People? No, Honeſt *Country-man*, I never writ in my Life to pleaſe any Body, any *Party* or *Faction*. I write only for the Sake of Truth, and the good of my Country; and in both Reſpects the Subjects I have lately handled, anſwer the Deſign and End of my writing: Sure I am, no good *Engliſhman* can Reflect on my hearty endeavours to ſerve my Country, and I value not a Ruſh what others ſay of me. As to the *High Flyers*, it's become an uſeleſs Subject, they are Wing-broken, they have like *Icarus* fled too near the Sun of *Arbitrary Power*, and have melted their Waxen Plumes: Beſides, ſhould I talk too much for any Church, it would call my Religion in Queſtion; for now a-days it is the common Opinion of Mankind, that thoſe who make the greateſt Noiſe about Religion, have the leaſt pretence to it. My famous Predeceſſor *Roger*, the Guide to the Inferiour Clergy, in Reigns not out of Memory, talked ſo much of the Church, and the Church, that every Body thought him Born in the Belfrey, with a Steeple in his Belly; and yet I have been told that the Pious *Obſervator* had not been within a Church Door, in 16 years together, according to his own Confeſſion. Every thing in its Seaſon; ſoft Fire makes ſweet Malt: I had rather perſwade by force of Argument, than Exaſperate by Satyr. My Deſign is to make this Paper uſeful, and I have choſen Subjects for that purpoſe.

Country m. I muſt needs agree with you in this Point, you could not have choſen better Subjects, nor better tim'd. Nothing is more worthy of the Conſideration of the People of *England* than the *Woollen Manufacture*; which I am really perſwaded is highly Beneficial to this Kingdom, if we had *Ways* and *Means* to keep our Wooll at home: A Gentleman, experienced in the Woollen Manufacture, told me, what a great Loſs our Nation ſuſtains by the Exportation of one Pack of Wooll, containing 240 *l.* weight.

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
1 *Pack of good Clothing Wooll is worth*	12	00	00
For Dying and other Charges	03	10	00
	15	10	00

This Wooll made into fine mixt Broad Cloth, is worth upwards of 50 *l.* ſo that it plainly appears, that one Pack of ſuch Wooll going out of the Nation, is upwards of 34 *l.* loſs. Beſides the Queens Cuſtoms, and the Advantage they have by being hereby enabled to work up 2 Packs of their own growth, by mixing it with one of ours; and in the mean time our *People* are ready to ſtarve for want of Employment. This ſaid Pack of Wooll will employ 63 People, and keep them hard at work for one Week, *viz.*

Two Men to Sort, Dry, mix it, and make it fit for the Scribler or Stock-Carder; it will employ 5 Men to Scrible or Stock-card it, 20 Women to Spin it, and as many Girls to Card for them. It will employ 6 Weavers and two Boys, to wind Quills for them, and ſix Men and one Boy to *Scower*, *Burl*, *Full*, *Dreſs*, *Rack*, *Preſs* and make it fit for the Market.

And if this Pack of Wooll was work'd up into Hoſe, which pay the Queen 7*d.* ½*d.* *per* dozen, it would employ treble the People and be treble Advantage to the Kingdom.

Obſ. Very well, Sir; and is not this a uſeful Subject? Does it not appear by this how great a profit our Wooll is to our Nation, how great a Loſs to have it Tranſported, and how great our Concern ought to be to keep it at home? We have had, in one Year, Thirty Thouſand Packs of our Wooll Landed at three Ports in *France*; which by this Computation muſt amount to One Million and Twenty Thouſand Pounds loſs to the Kingdom, beſides what was Tranſported to other parts in the *French* Kings Dominions, and to *Flanders*. And is it not a ſtrange thing that hitherto, no effectual way has been taken to prevent the Exportation of this Beneficial Commodity? But pray, Honeſt *Country-man*, what is the News at *London*?

Country-m. I think, Sir, our Parliament has done one very good thing, in ſettling one Hundred Thouſand Pounds *per Ann.* on His Royal Highneſs; in caſe he ſhould ſurvive Her Majeſty.

Obſ. I hope they will do a great many other good things before they riſe: But I'll aſſure you this is highly praiſe-worthy in our Repreſentatives; tho' it is but a Debt due to the great Worth and Tranſcendent Vertues of His Royal Highneſs; we may ſay of him as the old *Romans* us'd to ſay of their beſt Patriots, *De Republica optime meruit.* He has deſerved well of the Common-Wealth, and Merits the Eſteem of all Ranks and Degrees of People. Time has

been

been, when *England* has been sorely pillaged by reason of Foreign Alliances; when the Relations of the Crown have brought their Country-men into Offices of the *Highest Trust* and *Greatest Profit*, to eat up the Bread of the Natives; but His Royal Highness has not used his Interest with his Royal Consort to this purpose; but on the contrary, has behaved himself more like a Native than a Stranger. *Anno* 1. *Mariæ Stat.* 2 *Cap.* 2. Upon conclusion of her Marriage with *Philip* the Son of the Emperour, and Prince of *Spain*; it is provided that the said Prince shall not promote, admit, or receive to any Office, Administration, or Benefice, in the Realm of *England*, and Dominions thereunto belonging, any Stranger, or Persons not born under the Dominion and Subjection of the said Noble Queen. *Cook Inst.* 225. A People cannot be too exact and cautious in their Preliminaries, to the Succession or Relation of a Foreigner to the Crown of *England*; and tho' no Law in Force has obliged His Royal Highness to what *Philip* was confin'd to, by Statute Law; yet such has been the Evenness of his Temper; that he has not made the Nation uneasie by preferments of Foreigners, or raised the least Suspicion upon Him, by his being Intrested in any Party or Faction. What News else have you at *London?*

Country-m. The People are half gone mad about Religion; they say there is a Bill against *Occasional Conformity.* Pray what is *Occasional Conformity?*

Obs. I protest, I can't tell; I have heard that Bill is to exclude Dissenters from Offices, and I never yet knew a Dissenter in an Office. I shan't give you my Opinion in the Case, but I will here give you the Reasons of some Noble Peers against taking the Sacrament as a Qualification for an *Office*, which were given in the year 1688.

1. Because it gives great part of the Protestant Freemen of *England*, reason to complain of Inequality, and hard Usage, when they are excluded from publick Employments by Law: And also, because it deprives the King and Kingdom of divers Men, fit and capable to serve the Publick, in several Stations; and that, for a meer scruple of Conscience, which can by no means render them suspected, much less disaffected to the Government.

2. Because His Majesty, as the common and indulgent Father of His People, having expressed, an earnest desire of Liberty for tender Consciences to His Protestant Subjects; and my Lords, the Bishops, having divers of them, on several Occasions, professed an Inclination to, and own'd the reasonableness of such a Christian Temper: We apprehend it will raise Suspicion in some Mens minds of *something else than the Care of Religion*, or the *Publick*; and different from a design to heal our Breaches, when they find that by confining *Secular Employments* to *Ecclesiastical Conformity*; those are shut out from Civil Affairs, whose Doctrine and Worship may be tolerated by Authority of Parliament; there being a Bill before us, by Order of the House, to that purpose; especially, when without this Exclusive Rigour, the Church is secured in all her Priviledges and Preferments: No Body being hereby let into them, who is not strictly Conformable.

3. Because to set marks of Distinction and Humiliation on any sort of Men, who have not rendred themselves justly suspected to the Government, as it is at all times to be avoided by the Makers of just and equitable Laws: So may it be particularly of ill effect to the Reformed Interest, at Home and Abroad, in this present Conjuncture, which stands in need of the United Hands and Hearts of all Protestants, against the open Attempts, and Secret Endeavours of a restless Party, and a potent Neighbour, who is more Zealous than *Rome* it self, to plant *Popery* in these Kingdoms, and labours with his utmost Force to settle his Tyranny upon the Ruins of the Reformation thro' all *Europe*.

4. Because it turns the Edge of a Law (we know not by what Fate) upon *Protestants*, and Friends to the Government, which was intended against *Papists*, to Exclude them from Places of Trust, as Men avowedly Dangerous to our Government and Religion. And thus, the taking the Sacrament, which was enjoined only as a means to discover *Papists*, is now made a distinguishing Duty amongst *Protestants*, to weaken the whole, by casting off a part of them.

5. Because Mysteries of Religion, and Divine Worship, are of Divine Original, and of a Nature so wholly distant from the Secular Affairs of Politick Society, that they cannot be applied to those Ends; and therefore the Church, by the Law of the Gospel, as well as common Prudence, ought to take care, neither to offend tender Consciences within it self, nor give Offence to those without, by Mixing their Sacred Mysteries with Secular Interests.

6. Because we cannot see how it can consist with the Law of God, Common Equity, or the Right of any Free-born Subject, that any one be punished without Crime. If it be a Crime not to take the Sacrament according to the Usage of the Church of *England*, every one ought to be punished for it, which no Body affirms: If it be no Crime; those who are capable, and judged fit for Employments by the King, ought not to be punished, with a Law of Exclusion, for not doing that which is no Crime to forbear.

If it be urged still, as an effectual Test, to discover and keep out *Papists*; the taking the Sacraments, in those *Protestants* Congregations, where they are Members, and known, will be at least as effectual to that purpose.

I am willing to take the Opinion of my Betters, especially when they give better Reasons than I am capable of giving, and leave them to your Consideration.

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